

THE
STORY

of the

CARAVAN;

OR, THE

Driver and his Dog.



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THE

CARAVAN, &c.

MANUEL, Regent of Spain, usurped the throne some years after Prince Ferdinand came of proper age to take upon himself the regal authority, according to the will of the late Monarch, his royal father. The traitor Manuel caused a proclamation to be made, declaring Ferdinand to be illegitimate, and that he, as next heir to the throne, would never resign his rights to the Prince whom he banished from the kingdom; and the unfortunate youth sought shelter from his enemies in the Court of France. The tyrant by the power of gold and other valuable incitements, gained to him-

self a considerable number of courtiers who supported him in his usurpation. In particular, Navarro, an officer of rank and power finding under the government of Manuel that he could give free scope to his own rapacious cruelty, openly declared for him, and entered with avidity into all the tyrannical schemes of the regent.

The city of Madrid exhibited daily the most affecting scenes. Fathers, husbands, and sons, torn from their most dear and interesting ties, and sacrificed to the fury of the despot, because they would not acknowledge him for their lawful sovereign, and numbers of their nobles were pining in dismal dungeons, and their estates given to the vile flatterers of Manuel. Fel Marchioness of Calatrava, a woman of extreme beauty and interesting manners, unfortunately caught the attention of Manuel, and he instantly became enamoured of her person; but she rejected the dishonourable offers that his passion prompted him to make with all the dignity of offend-

When he found that all the allurements he offered were despised by the lovely Leonora, he proceeded to threats of the

most horrid nature; and the Marchioness, fearful that the life of her beloved Alphonso was in danger from the machinations of his base rival, disclosed the whole affair to her noble husband, and besought him to provide for their mutual safety, and that of their infant Julio, the only pledge with which Heaven had as yet blest their love.

Flight was their only means; and the Marquis proposed leaving their palace at midnight, and seek with the utmost privacy a retreat for Leonora and his son, while he repaired to the standard of his Prince, who was now preparing to assert his rights, assisted by most of the European princes.

The Marchioness, and her faithful attendant Rosa, prepared for their departure without loss of time; but, alas! about seven in the evening he was arrested and conveyed to prison by the mandate of the tyrant, who, from a treacherous domestic, had received intimation of the design; and the hapless Leonora was ordered not to quit her abode under pain of death.

The Marquis of Calatrava had become very popular by his victories in the late war, and was much beloved by the people. The

Regent was aware that a public execution of this nobleman, under a charge of treason, might be attended with fatal consequences to his own power; he therefore ordered Navarro to confine the Marquis in a close covered caravan and convey him to Gomez, the governor of Barcelona. They were not to give him sustenance of any kind while on the road, though it was a ten day's journey; and if he should by any means survive this period, which they could hardly suspect would be possible, Gomez had private orders how to dispose of his prisoner.

Blabbo, a young honest countryman, but of so artless a character that it was impossible for him to keep a secret, if even his life had depended on the concealment, was the driver of a caravan, which was often employed in removing the prisoners from Madrid to Barcelona. He was possessed of a valuable dog, named Carlo, for whom he had a most extraordinary attachment. This man was chosen by Navarro, on account of his apparent simplicity, to convey the unfortunate Calatrava his destined journey. Blabbo had a great veneration for the Marquis and his Lady, from whom he had received several acts of kindness,

and Rosa was the mistress of his heart; so he recoiled with horror at the thought of taking any part in the intended cruelty. But again reflecting that if he refused the office of Driver to the caravan, it would be eagerly accepted by one of a more callous disposition, who would obey with exactness all the cruel commands of the ferocious Navarro, he resolved to comply, and see if he could not by some happy stratagem save the life of the noble unfortunate Alphonso.

The Marquis was forced into the caravan at the dead of night, and attended by Navarro and Roderigo, who was another officer of Manuel's (but not entrusted with the cruel scheme of starving the prisoner to death) and some inferior soldiers, proceeded on their way to Barcelona; where they arrived after a tedious journey, from the heavy rains that had lately fell.

They proceeded to the palace of the Governor, which communicated with the strong prison of Barcelona; the guards displaying their colours, and a military band playing a march. The caravan followed next drawn by two camels, and surrounded by alguazils and soldiers; the

procession closed by Navarro and Roderigo on horseback.

Navarro ordered the soldiers to halt; and then gave Roderigo a letter to convey to the Governor, and to tell him to make preparations for the reception of his prisoner.

"Do, Captain," said Blabbo, "bid him get a coffin and a hearse."

Roderigo exclaimed—"Is your prisoner dead, then?"

"To be sure," said Blabbo, "Have we not been ten days on our journey hither; and, by the Commander's orders has he not been denied meat and drink, and almost deprived of air?—But it was told me as a secret, and I have too much honour to betray it."

Roderigo uttered an exclamation of horror and surprise; but was ordered by Navarro to be gone and obey his orders, with a reprimand for prying, and a threat, that if he did not hold his peace he should be reported to the Regent; and then turning to Blabbo, he asked him how he dared to betray the confidence reposed in him.

"I betray;—I, my Lord!" said the simple Blabbo,— "Never.—Now, now ask these soldiers, since I have been driver

of this caravan, did I ever tell them that some of the prisoners died for want of food—some were disposed of down a trap-door at the Governor's, and others blown up in a fire-ship?—Did I now; can you lay any of these things to my charge?—Oh, I never tell state secrets!”



Navarro enraged, drew his sword, and brandished it over the head of Blabbo; who cried out, “Take care, Sir, for your own sake

"Take care: if you touch me, Carlo will fly at you; for my dog don't care whether he breakfasts on a dead mule or a live commander; and it certainly is no secret that he lamed your predecessor."

Navarro sheathed his sword, not without betraying some symptoms of fear at the driver's Newfoundland friend: and he ordered some of the soldiers to proceed to the Governor's, where he will leave them for a while, and return to the Marchioness.

Alphonso had not been conveyed from home many hours ere the faithful Blabbo contrived to let them know how he was disposed of, and the cruel decree of the tyrant Manuel for taking him to Barcelona.

The heroic Leonora resolved to follow her husband, and endeavour to save his life. She disregarded the order of the Regent to remain in her own palace, and knew the only way to preserve her honour was by immediate flight; for she dreaded, with reason, that the tyrant would take advantage of her unprotected state, and force her to compliance with his wishes.

Disguising herself as much as possible, she took her son Julio, and accompanied by Rosa, she left Madrid before the morning's

dawn. They travelled on foot, except that by a fortunate chance they now and then got a conveyance for a few miles, by charitable travellers who believed them to be soldiers' wives journeying to their husbands. After encountering many difficulties, they arrived at the mountains adjacent to the Governor's palace.

The Marchioness and her son were too much fatigued to proceed one step further; and the enquires and lamentations of little Julio for his father, filled the bosom of the amiable Leonora with anguish, and aroused every tender recollection of past happiness. They sat down on the ground, that they might rest their weary limbs, while Rosa went to seek for some cottage that might afford them shelter till the next day. But the search was in vain, and she returned to her mistress overwhelmed with grief at the disappointment; and our forlorn travellers resolved, if possible, to proceed till they should meet some friendly asylum to receive them. With this view they moved on, with a slow and tottering pace, almost ready to sink to the earth with fatigue. But, alas! they were soon surrounded by a band of pirates, who, regardless of the tears and

intreaties of the Marchioness, prepared to drag them on board of a vessel bound for Algiers. The pirates were threatening them with death if they made any resistance, when, fortunately for Leonora, their leader, the bold Arabbo, who had long been a terror to the coast of Spain, entered, and in a stern voice bid the men desist, and reprimanded them for their conduct in attacking helpless females. But great was the surprise of the Marchioness, when Arabbo, advanced towards her, bent on one knee, and informed her that in spite of her disguise he knew her to be the wife of the renowned Calatrava.

“Be not afraid,” said the Algerine, “I will not harm ye. Once the brave Alphonso saved my life; and it shall never be said that Arabbo was ungrateful. From my men I have learnt the hard fate of Calatrava; and that Manuel, enraged at your elopement, employs his emissaries to seek you with unremitting vigilance. But I will conduct you, your child, and attendant, to the gates of the convent, whose spire you see peeping over the summit of this craggy hill. There you may rest in safety; for, though I am a pirate, yet, for a generous

service I rendered the superior, you will be admitted within the holy wall : and be assured, that if I can discover that Calatrava yet lives, I will employ every means I can devise to rescue him from Manuel."

Leonora thanked the kind Arabbo, and he left her rather cheerful from the hopes he had kindled in her faithful bosom : and the good sisters of the convent vied with each other in administering comfort to the wearied ladies and the prattling Juliò.

Early the next morning the Marchioness received from Arabbo the pleasing intelligence that her Alphonso yet survived, tho' a prisoner to the care of Gomez.

To account for this miraculous preservation, we must return to the arrival of the marquis at the Governor's.

Gomez came forth to meet them, and pay his respects to Navarro, who presented him with the following order from the Regent, which the Governor read aloud :

IF the prisoner, on his arrival at Barcelona, is not dead, you are required to keep him in close confinement, under your own immediate care ; and as it has been represented unto us, that you neglect your duty, from the love of gaily and intrigue, you are ordered most implicitly to obey us or Count Navarro has the power to dismiss you. Given under our hands at the Court of Madrid. MANUEL."

"Here is a wicked, lying, scandalous world!" exclaimed Gomez, in a great passion. "Count Navarro, I have great enemies, and this is not their first attempt to ruin me. 'Tis not three weeks ago they set fire to the castle: and mark the consequence. I gave a hundred dollars for a fire escape ladder, and I lay every night with the rope round my hand. In short, so much am I on the alarm, that last night seeing a great blaze, and hearing a violent knocking, out went the ladder, and down I came shivering before the Archbishop and his servants, who were returning home from a late conversation."

Here Blabbo burst out into a loud laugh, and excused himself by saying, that even his dog could not help smiling.

"Peace, sirrah!" said the Count, "and now, if this base traitor live, let him come forth: but if the hand of heaven has doomed him to his fate: let none dare censure the Regent, whose mercy is unequalled."

Blabbo opened the door of the Caravan: the Marquis descended the steps, and walked some paces with a firm step.

Navarro's countenance betrayed his surprise, while he exclaimed—"How! Cala-

trava so little altered!—'Sdeath, whose work is this?"—"Whose," said the Marquis, "but that bounteous power, that gave me what some Spaniards never dreamt on? The pride of conscience and of honour; and e'en in chains Alphonso pities Manuel." "Conscience and honour," said the Count, with a satirical sneer, "may be very valuable acquisitions: but I suspect some stronger cause. Guards, search the caravan, see if no trace of sustenance be found."

"Hold, I entreat you," said the Marquis.

"Away, obey my order," replied Navarro.

The guards then produced flasks, &c. from the interior of the caravan.

"Confusion!" said the Count. "Is there no end to treachery and traitors? Roderigo, this is your generous, conscientious act!—Be prepared; your life shall answer for it this instant."

"My act," replied Roderigo. "No—Much as I wish to save the life of the noble Calatrava, by all the hopes of happiness hereafter, I did not—dared not hazard such an enterprise."

"'Tis false, traitor!—Guards, seize and bear him to his doom," said the Count.

"Hold, Roderigo is innocent," exclaimed

Blabbo, and I would not keep this secret another moment for the whole world. I am the guilty person. You may remember, when we left Madrid, I refused to undertake the savage office, unless I was allowed plenty of provisions for myself and my dog. Very well. The Marquis every night, through a private aperture, has had the best part of it, and I and poor Carlo have been half starved, but what of that; I have feasted on better food—and see! brute as he is, he don't turn tail on his master for having saved a fellow-creature's life."

"Astonishing," said the Marquis. "Was your's the unknown hand I nightly pressed with gratitude and zeal?"

"It was, my lord," replied the driver.

"And is it not a shame that the renowned Marquis de Calatrava, who so often led you all to victory, should be starved by his government, and fed by a poor driver and his dog?—But now the secret is out, I don't care whether I am shoved down your trap-doors, or blown up in your fire-vessels."

The Count ordered the guards to drag the villain to the castle.

"Hear me, soldiers," said the Marquis.

"There was a time when Calatrava was so much your idol, that what he spoke was law, but now he is your suppliant.—Spare my preserver, for your own sakes spare him; none lives in safety when a despot rules! And, when, like me, you are plunged into a dungeon's gloom, think how you'll need a friend to——."

Here Gomez interrupted the unfortunate Alphonso, by declaring he would not hear another word, and bidding the Count guard the Marquis, and he would take care of the driver.

"Farwell, my lord!" said Blabbo, "may you yet live to see your dear loved lady; and, should her faithful Rosa ask after her poor lover and his dog, (for I know Carlo will not long survive his master) tell her we hope she will wear mourning for us the usual time: and then (weeping) the sooner she follows us, the happier it will make us.

The Marquis intreated him not to call to memory feelings that would weaken their fortitude, but to forget life's blessings and bear their fate like men.

And thus the unhappy Alphonso and his humble friend were borne to their dungeons.

On the evening of the fourth day after

their confinement, the Marchioness, Julio, and Rosa lingered round the dreary walls of the castle, in hopes to gain some intelligence of the beloved prisoners.

Rosa, being fearful of preceeding too near the castle, is left by the Marchioness, who taking the infant Julio in her arms, determines to obtain an entrance if possible, and brave death for the sake of her Alphonso.

Poor Rosa remained behind, lamenting the loss of her lover: where, to her inexpressible surprise and joy, she saw him approach with his dog and a young Spaniard, in great haste: and Rosa, that she might astonish Blabbo with her unexpected appearance at Barcelona, concealed herself behind one of the trees, but Carlo presently discovered her to his master, who was delighted at meeting with his charming Rosa.

"My dear girl," said the grateful Blabbo, "this generous Spaniard was my gaoler, and leaving the prison to purchase provisions, Carlo accidentally followed him, from what motive I know not, but it was a lucky one for me and Pedro, for he on his return was attacked by two of Arabbo's banditti. The dog lamed one and throttled the other, and, in return, my freedom was secured,—

Oh, blessings on his beautiful face! If I thought, Rosa, it would not break your heart with jealousy, I could kiss and hug him to atoms."

Here the Marchioness enters with her son, in great despondency.

"O, my Rosa," said the weeping Leonora, "all is lost! the castle is guarded so close, no entrance can be gained: and passing yonder settlements, I heard the sentinels in earnest talk, and dreadful to relate! their words were death and Calatrava!—Hark! what means that drum that beats within the castle?"

"Ah, Pedro!" said Blabbo, "what means that muffled drum?—Speak, my friend!"

The man replied that doubtless they were preparing for the execution of the Marquis and he must retire to secure his own safety, for fear he should be discovered in having liberated Blabbo.

"But tell me," said Blabbo, "before we part, in what part of the castle the Marquis is confined."

"Adjoining to the Governor's bed-chamber," said the man, "close by the turret."

"O, is that the Governor's apartment?" said Blabbo. "Do, my good Pedro, take care

of your friend Carlo for half an hour, and I will fetch him when I can watch an opportunity to do so, without risk to you or myself.

Pedro acquiesced, and retired.

“And now, my good lady, do not be cast down, for though force can’t assist us, stratagem may: and if I can but get the Governor out of the castle, and myself into it, you still shall boast the best of husbands Julio the best of fathers, and I the best of wives; for Rosa shall reward me with her hand, and we shall be a very happy, handsome couple.”

Rosa assured her faithful lover that, if he would save the life of the Marquis, she would be his wife before the ringing of the first prayer-bell.

Blabbo kissed her, and cried—“here goes: and running to the castle gate, began to knock loudly, to the great astonishment of the Marchioness and Rosa, and cried “Fire! Fire! Fire!” with a voice like a Stentor.

Gomez appeared at the window with a night-cap and gown.

Blabbo knocks again, and cries—“Fire! Fire! Fire!” The Governor flings out the ladder, and beseeches him to fix it to the

ground: and Blabbo calls out that the roof was going to fall in, and he would be burnt if he did not immediately descend. Gomez hastened down the ladder, in a great fright, and advanced forward up the court-yard. Blabbo directly ran up the ladder, gets in at the window, and draws the machine in with him; and, making signs to Rosa to detain the governor, instantly disappears from their view.

The Governor, still insensible through terror, asked who he had to thank for his deliverance.

"Me, Sir," said Rosa, advancing briskly towards him.

"You, Pshaw—God bless me, I see neither flames nor ladder!"

"I fear it is burnt, Sir," said Rosa.

The Governor began to holla: "Guards—Navarro—treason—ruin—villainy!"

The Guards appeared from the gates of the castle, and left them open. The heroic Leonora, with her son, seized the favorable moment, and entered, regardless of danger, in search of her husband. The guards were dismissed to fetch Count Navarro; and the Governor rushing towards the castle, declared his intention of sacrificing Alphonso

to his revenge : while Rosa interrupted him by throwing herself into his arms, and pretending to faint.

Just at this moment Navarro entered with his soldiers, who all seemed to enjoy the ludicrous scene. The Count reprehended the Governor for the alarm he had made, and ridiculed him for his undress, and a young damsel in his arms : while Rosa still more confused him by thanking them for rescuing her from the rudeness of the Governor, who could make peace with Navarro on no other terms than offering to put the Marquis to instant death. This was accepted, and they retired for that cruel purpose.

In the mean time the Marquis had worked his way out of the dungeon, by means of an instrument which Blabbo had placed for that purpose in the caravan, and was just quitting his prison, when he met the Marchioness and his son. This joyful meeting was soon succeeded by another. Blabbo who had sought in vain for the Marquis, now approached them and shewed the ladder which he flung out of the window : and Rosa, who had been attentively watching their motions, fixed it in the ground, and

they were about to descend, when they were seized by Gomez and Navarro, who ordered the Marquis instantly to be taken on board a fire-ship, and blown up in the harbour. Navarro then informed Leonora that the Regent once more offered her his love, and wealth, and power to attend her steps, but if she refused, her loved Alphonso and her son was to perish before her face.

The Marchioness, after a pause, exclaimed — "Be it so: better lose every thing than honour, which is a blessed Manuel never knew. — O, they shall pray with their last breath, that Spain may see its youthful sovereign crowned. Then mothers and wives will be happy, and not like me, be a victim of a tyrant and his parasite."

Navarro gave orders to Ferdinand to seize Julio and bear him to the rock, and then cast him into the sea: and Guzman was to hasten to the shore, and give the usual signal to the fire-ship, which was now full of prisoners sentenced to this cruel death. After repeated struggles, they tore the child from the Marchioness. Just as the fire-ship was heard to blow up, Leonora fainted and fell on the floor, while Ferdinand, hastened to obey the cruel orders.

Just as the Marchioness resolved, she beheld Ferdinand appear on the rock with Julio in his arms, followed by Blabbo and his dog Carlo. Ferdinand threw the child into the sea. At the same instant the dog rushes after him, and encouraged by his master, swims towards Julio, and brings him safe to land, while Blabbo filled the air with his shouts: and giving the child to Rosa, flings Ferdinand headlong from the rock.

To complete the joy of Leonora, the Marquis entered with Roderigo, who had by some stratagem saved him from going on board the fire-ship, and just at the moment of his deliverance, the news arrived at Barcelona that the Regent was deposed, and their lawful Sovereign crowned: and the guards were unanimous in seizing Navarro and his confederates, while the Marquis and his friends returned in triumph to Madrid.

FINIS.